A

Funeral-Sermon

FOR THE

Reverend, Holy and Excellent DIVINE,

Mr. *Richard Baxter*,

Who deceased *Decemb.* 8. 1691.

WITH

An Account of His LIFE.

By *WILLIAM BATES*, D.D.

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Funeral-Sermon

To the Right Worſhipfull, and his much Honoured Friend,

Sr *Henry Aſhurſt*, Baronet.

SIR,

YOur Noble and Conſtant Kindneſs to Mr. Baxter *Living, and your Honourable Reſpect to him Dead, have induced me to inſcribe the following Memorial of him to your Name. He was moſt worthy of your higheſt Eſteem and Love, for the firſt Impreſſions of Heaven upon your Soul, were in Reading his unvalued Book of the* Saints Everlaſting Reſt. *This kindled a mutual Affection in your Breaſts: his Love was*

Directing, Counſelling, and Exciting you to ſecure your Future Happineſs: your Love was Obſervant, Gratefull, and Beneficent to him. The Sincerity and Generoſity of your Friendſhip, was very evident, in your appearing and ſtanding by him, when he was ſo roughly and unrighteouſly handled, by one, who was the diſhonour of this Ages Law; whoſe Deportment in a high place of Judicature, was ſo contrary to Wiſdom, Humanity, and Juſtice, that there need no foul words to make his Name odious. Of this and your other Favours Mr. Baxter *retain'd a dear and laſting Senſe; and in his dying hours declared, that you had been the beſt*

beſt friend he ever had. He has finiſhed his Courſe, and received his Crown: *His Name will ſhine longer than his Enemies ſhall bark.*

I cannot omit the mentioning, that Mr. Boyle *and* Mr. Baxter, *thoſe incomparable Perſons in their ſeveral Studies, and dear Friends, died within a ſhort ſpace of one another.* Mr. Boyle *was engaged in the Contemplation of the Deſign and Architecture of the viſible World, and made rare diſcoveries in the ſyſtem of Nature: not for Curioſity and barren Speculation, but to admire and adore the Perfections of the Deity in the Variety, Order, Beauty, and marvellous Artifice of the Creatures*

that compoſe this great Univerſe. Mr. Baxter *was converſant in the inviſible World: his Mind was conſtantly applied to underſtand the harmonious Agreement of the Divine Attributes in the Oeconomy of our Salvation, and to reſtore Men to the Favour and Image of God. They are now admitted into the inlightned and purified* Society *above: where the immenſe Volumes of the Divine Wiſdom are laid open, and by one glance of an eye, they diſcover more perfectly the Cauſes, Effects, and Concatenation of all things in Heaven and Earth, than the moſt diligent Inquirers can do here, in a thouſand years* Study, *though they had the Sagacity of* Solomon. *By the Light*

Light of Glory, they ſee the face of God, and are ſatisfied with his likeneſs for ever.

'Tis a high honour to you, that Mr. Boyle *and Mr.* Baxter *ſhould by their Laſt Will nominate you amongſt their Executors. It was the Saying of a Wiſe* Roman, Malo divi Auguſti judicium, quam beneficium. *I had rather have the Eſteem of the Emperour* Auguſtus *than his Gifts: for he was an underſtanding Prince, and his Eſteem was very Honourable to a Perſon. That two who ſo excell'd in Wiſdom and Goodneſs, ſhould commit to your Truſt the diſpoſal of their Eſtates for the Uſes of Piety and Charity, is a more noble Teſti-*

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mony of their Esteem of your Prudence and inviolable Integrity, than if they had bequeathed to you rich Legacies.

It is a satisfaction to me, that I have complied with Mr. Baxter's *desire in Preaching his Funeral-Sermon, and with yours in Publishing it. I shall unfeignedly recommend Your self, your excellent Lady, and vertuous Children, to the Divine Mercies: and remain, with great Respect,*

SIR,

Your humble and

faithfull Servant,

William Bates.

A

SERMON

On the DEATH of

Mr. *Richard Baxter.*

Luke 23. 46.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud Voice, he said, Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.

THE Words are the Prayer of our Blessed Saviour in the Extremity of his Passion. His unrighteous and implacable Enemies had nail'd his Body to the Cross, but they

had no power over his Spirit, that was ready to take its flight to the Sanctuary of Life and Immortality. This dying Prayer of Christ is a Pattern for sincere Christians: He has invested them with the Relation of Children of God; and authorises them by his Example, to commend their departing Spirits to his powerful Love. The Observation I shall unfold and apply, is this:

'Tis the Priviledg of dying Saints, to commend their Spirits into the Hands of their Heavenly Father.

In discoursing of this, I shall,

I. Consider the Foundation of this Priviledg.
II. Shew what a blessed Priviledg this is.
III. Apply it.

I. The

I. The Foundation of this Priviledg is to be consider'd: This is built upon two things.

1. The Relation of God to the Saints.

2. His Perfections joined with that Relation.

1. The Relation of God to the Saints. The Title of *Father* is upon several Accounts attributed to God.

(1.) He is a Father by Creation: *O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the Clay, thou art the Potter, we are the Work of thine Hands.* He formed Man's Body into a Majestick Figure, becoming his original State, being Lord of the lower World. But in a peculiar manner he is stiled *the Father of Spirits:* they have a near Alliance, and Resemblance of the Father of Lights, in their intellectual Isa. 64.

Powers, and their immortal Nature. From hence it is, the Job 2. Angels are called *the Sons of God*: They are the eldeſt Offſpring of his Power. *Adam* has Luke 3. the Title of the *Son of God*. And ſince the Fall, Men are called *God's Offspring*. There is an indelible Character of Dignity engraven in the reaſonable Nature by the Hand of God. But ſince Man turn'd Rebel to his Creator and Father, this endearing obliging Relation aggravates his Rebellion, but gives him no Intereſt in the Paternal Love of God, of which he has made a deadly Forfeiture. 'Tis threatned againſt ignorant perverſe Sinners, *He that made them, will not ſave them.*

(2.) Upon the account of external Calling and Profeſſion, there is an intercurrent Relation of Father and Sons between God

God and his People. Thus the Posterity of *Seth* are called *the Sons of God*: and the entire Nation of the Jews are so stiled; *When* Israel *was young, I called my Son out of* Egypt. And all that have received Baptism, the Seal of the holy Covenant, and profess Christianity, in this general Sense may be called the Children of God. But 'tis not the outward Dedication that entitles Men to a saving Interest in God, unless they live according to that Dedication. There are baptized Infidels, as well as unbaptized. How many every day fall as deep as Hell, whose hopes were high, on the account of their external Christianity.

Gen. 6.

Hosea 11.

(3.) God is our Father upon a more excellent Account, by Renovation and Adoption. The natural Man is what St. *Paul* saith of the voluptuous Widow,

dead while he lives. There is not only a ceſſation of ſpiritual Acts, but an utter incapacity to perform them: he cannot obey nor enjoy God. Now the renewing of Man is called a Regeneration: Our Saviour tells *Nicodemus, Verily I ſay unto you, Unleſs a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* The reaſon of the Expreſſion is, becauſe there is a new Nature, ſpiritual, holy and heavenly, communicated, different from the carnal, polluted and earthly Nature, derived from the firſt *Adam.* And as the Relation of a Father reſults from the communicating a vital active Principle to another, in that kind of Life like his own: ſo God by making us Partakers of *a Divine Nature, of his Life and Image,* is ſtiled our Father: *Of*

Jam. 1. 18. *his own Will begat he us, with the Word*

Word of Truth. And we are said, *to be born again, not of corruptible Seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* By the Divine Influence, the Word of God implants in them such Qualities and Dispositions whereby they resemble God, *are holy, as he is holy, in all manner of Conversation.* They are called *godly*, as they are like him in their Minds, Affections and Actions. And to such God has the Heart and Eye of a Father, to regard and relieve them in all their Exigencies. *Like as a Father pities his Children, so the Lord pities them that serve him.*

1 Pet. 11. 25.

Psal. 103. 13.

We are also the Children of God by Adoption. This heavenly Privilege is obtained for us by the meritorious Sufferings of Christ, and is founded in our Union with him. *God sent his*

Gal. 4. *Son, that he might redeem them that were under the Law, that they might receive the Adoption of Sons.* For his sake we are not only pardoned, but preferr'd to this Heavenly Dignity. 'Tis worthy of Observation, that the Degrees of our Redemption mentioned in Scripture, have annex'd to them parallel degrees of our Adoption. Thus when 'tis said, *We are redeemed from the Curse of the Law*, 'tis added, *That we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* When 'tis said, *We are freed from the servile Spirit of the Law*, it follows, *We* Rom. 8. 15. *have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* And the Apostle tells us, That the redemption of our Bodies from *the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, is our Adoption*, that is the manifestation of

of it before all the World.

Our Adoption is founded in our Union with Christ. A Member of Christ, and a Son of God are the same: 'Tis therefore said, *As many as received him, to them gave he Power,* or Privilege, *to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Joh. 1. 12. And *ye are all the Sons of God, by Faith in Jesus Christ.* Gal. 3. 6. This is the vital Band of our Union with Christ, and invests us with his Relation to God. When he was to leave the World, he sends this comfortable Message to his Disciples; *Go, tell my Brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* Joh. 20. 17 His Relation has the precedence in Order, Dignity and Causality. He is God's own Son, in a sense infinitely high and proper to himself: *To which of the Angels said* Rom. 8. 3. Heb. 1. 5.

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he at any time, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee? The sublimest Prophet breaks forth
Isa. 53. with Wonder, *Who shall declare his Generation?* 'Tis above our Capacity and Conception. It becomes us to acquiesce in what the Scripture reveals. He is the eternal Word and Wisdom
Heb. 3. of God, *the Brightness of his Father's Glory.* This is the most fit Comparison: for as Light is productive of Light without any diminution; so the Eternal Father communicated his Essence to the Son. In short, God is Christ's Father by Nature, and God by Dispensation; he is our God as the Author of Nature, and our Father by Adoption.

Before I proceed, it is fit to observe the Excellence of the Evangelical Adoption above the Civil Adoption among Men.

(1.) Adop-

(1.) Adoption is a legal Act in imitation of Nature, for the Comfort of those who are without Children. But God had a Son, the Heir of his Love and Glory. His adopting Love is heightned by considering our Meanness and Vileness: we are but a little breathing Dust, worthless Rebels. The Apostle cries out in a rapture of Admiration and Joy, *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* If we consider the natural Distance between God and us, as he is the Creator, and we are the Works of his Hands, 'tis truly infinite; but the moral Distance between the holy righteous God and the guilty polluted Creature, is, if it were possible, more than infinite: Love inconceivable! That releases us from Bon-

Bondage, and adopts us into the Line of Heaven. If we admire any thing of this World in comparison of it, 'tis a sign we have no share in this Privilege.

(2.) Civil Adoption conveys no Praise-worthy Qualities into the Person that is adopted. A King may adopt one to be his Son, and the Heir of his Kingdom, but cannot endow him with a Royalty of Spirit, with ruling Wisdom, with Justice and Equity, Clemency and Bounty, with Magnanimity and Fortitude, that may qualify him to manage the Scepter. The adopted Prince may be of a low sordid Disposition, a Slave to his vile Lusts, and designing to enslave others. But all the adopted Sons of God are divinely renewed; they are purified from defiling & debasing Lusts, and are adorn'd with all the Graces

Graces of the Spirit, that God *is not aſhamed to be called their God and Father, nor Chriſt aſhamed to call them Brethren.* Now from this ſpecial Relation and Intereſt of God in the Saints, there is a ſure Foundation of their Truſt in his ſaving Mercy. *David* addreſſes himſelf to God for his preſervation from imminent Danger, *I am thine, ſave me:* As if his miſcarrying would be a Loſs to God, who had ſo dear a Propriety in him.

Heb. Heb. 2. Pſal. 119.

I come now to the ſecond thing that encourages the praying Faith of the Saints when they leave the World, to commend their Souls to him, His Perfections joined with his Relation: His Love inclines, his Truth engages, and his Power enables him to bring them ſafely to Heaven.

1. His

1. His Love. This is the brightest Ray of the Deity, the first and cleareſt Notion we have of God. St. *John* tells us, *God is Love.* His Love cannot be fully expreſs'd by the deareſt Relations and Affections in Nature. The Relation of Parents, as 'tis moſt deeply implanted in Nature, ſo it implies the moſt cordial, ſtrong and tender Affection. But as God is infinitely greater and better than earthly Parents; ſo he equally excels them, as in his Abilities, ſo in his good Will to his Children. Our Saviour directs us, *Call no Man Father upon Earth, for one is your Father, which is in Heaven:* The Title and Love of a Father is peculiar to him. Our Saviour argues, *If you that are evil, know how to give good things to your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father to thoſe that*

that ask him? The Inference is ſtrong, not only from the Divine Authority of the Speaker, but from the native Perſpicuity of the Things: for the Love of an earthly Father is but an Infuſion into his Breaſt from the heavenly Father, and but a faint reſemblance of his Love. The Love of a Mother is more tender and endearing than of a Father: Even a fearful Hen will fly upon Death, to preſerve its tender Brood from the Devourer: Yet the Love of God to his Children far excels it. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child?* What Heart, what Marble is in her Breaſt ſo incompaſſionate and unrelenting, as to neglect her helpleſs Infant? *She may, but,* ſaith God; *I will never forget thee.* The Seraphims, thoſe bright and unperiſhing Flames, are but faint and cold, in compariſon of

of God's Love to his Children. 'Tis obſervable how the Love of God to them expreſſes it ſelf in all the Notions of Propriety and Preciouſneſs, to make it more ſenſible to us. They are ſtiled *his Treaſure, his Jewels*, the moſt precious part of his Treaſure, the *Jewels of his Crown*, that are the richeſt Jewels. Now *will he throw away* his Treaſure, or ſuffer the cruel Enemy to rob him of his Jewels? Will he not take them into his ſafe Cuſtody? 'Tis to be obſerved, that the Eſteem and Affection of God principally reſpects the Souls of his Children: Their Souls have an original Affinity with him in their Subſtance as Spirits: and being *born again of the Spirit*, they are Spirit in their Divine Qualities & Endowments, and more endear'd to him than by their firſt

Exod. 19.
Mal. 3.
Zech. 9. 16

first Alliance. His tender Care to preserve them, will be correspondent to his Valuation and Love.

Moreover, the Condition of departing Souls affords another Argument of reliance upon his Love; for they leave this visible World, with all their Supports and Comforts; they are stripp'd of all sensible Securities: And will he leave them fatherless in such a forlorn and desolate State? His Love is express'd by Mercy, Compassion, Pity, melting Affections, that are most tenderly moved when the beloved Object is in Distress. Our Saviour propounds an Argument for dependance upon the delivering Love of God, from the Exigence of his People; *Shall not God deliver his own Elect*, the Designation of Love, *who cry day and night to him? He will do it speedily.* Love is ne-

ver more ardent and active than in times of Distress. Therefore when his dying Children are deprived of all their Hopes and dependance upon Creatures, and fly to him for Protection and Relief, will he not hear their mournful Requests, and grant their fainting Desires? When their earthly Tabernacles are so ruinous, that they are forc'd to dislodg, will the Love of a Heavenly Father suffer their naked Souls to wander in the vast Regions of *the other World, seeking Rest, and finding none?* Certainly he will bring them into his reviving Presence. If Divine Love be so condescending, that
Isa. 57. *the high and lofty One that inhabits Eternity, dwells with the humble and contrite Spirit,* to *revive the Spirit of the Humble,* when they are confin'd to our lowly Earth, we may be assur'd, when that

that Spirit ſhall be deveſted of Fleſh, he will bring it to Heaven the Temple of his Glory, to be with him for ever. 'Tis greater Love for a King to lay aſide his State, and dwell in a mean Cottage with his Favourite, than to receive him into his Palace, and communicate to him of his rich Abundance. 'Tis another moſt comfortable Conſideration, that the Love of God is unvariable towards his Children: His Love is the ſole moving Cauſe of our filial Relation to him: *Of his own Will he begat us by the Word of Truth.* James. His Soveraign free Love was the Principle of his electing any to the Dignity of being his Children: This Love is as unchangeable as free; and Election that proceeds from it, is as unchangeable as his Love. What can induce him to alter his Affection

towards them? For such is the perfection of his Knowledg, that he can never be surprized by a sudden new Event, that may cause a change in his Mind and Will. He foresaw all the Sins of his People, with their provoking Aggravations. Now if the foresight of them did not hinder his electing Love in its rise, can they frustrate its end, the bringing of them to Glory?

Besides, we may argue from what his Love has done for his Children, to what he will do: He has given his Son and Spirit to them, the surest Signs of his Love, if we consider the unvaluable Excellence of the Gifts, and the Design of the Giver.

The Son of God is the most excellent Gift of his Love, as undeserved, as he was undesired: And from hence the Apostle argues, *He that gave his Son for*

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us all, how much more will he with him give us all things? Bleſſed God! What richer Evidence, and more convincing Demonſtration can there be of thy Love? *Will he not with him give us all things?* The Inference is direct and concluſive, with reſpect to temporal and eternal Things. He will give to his Children in the preſent World, whatever his Wiſdom, in conjunction with his Love, ſees good for them. To illuſtrate this by a low and familiar Inſtance; If a Mother beſtows upon her Daughter rich Jewels for her Marriage-Ornaments, will ſhe deny her Pins to dreſs her? And we may as ſtrongly argue, that with his Son he will give us eternal Bleſſings. Will he give us the Tree of Life, and not permit us to eat of the Fruit of it? What was the deſign of

his Counsel and Compassion, in giving his Son to be a Sacrifice for us, but to restore us to his Favour? The Apostle reasons strongly, *If when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life.* He has paid our Ransom, and revers'd the Sentence of Condemnation against us; and it invincibly follows, he can more easily accomplish our Happiness in Heaven. If Love justify a Sinner, it will glorify a Saint.

And as the Gift of the Son, so the most precious Gift of the Spirit to God's Children, to make them holy and heavenly, is the most certain sign of his Love to them. The Apostle in the fullest expression speaks of it; *God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he has*

has loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, quickned us together with Christ: By Grace ye are saved. Sanctification is the effect of *rich Mercy, great Love*, and *saving Grace*. The Children of God are seal'd by the Holy Spirit to the Day of Redemption: that Seal distinguishes them from the obstinate and polluted World, and ratifies the conveyance of eternal Life to them. The Spirit is stiled the *Earnest of the Inheritance*. His dwelling in the Saints by his sanctifying and comforting Operations, is an Earnest of their dwelling with God in his Sanctuary above. From hence the Apostle propounds a strong Argument to assure the Saints, upon their leaving this World, of their reception into Heaven; *Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God*; and the

Almighty always obtains his End: *who hath also given us the earnest of his Spirit.* Holiness is the Morning-Star of the great Day; Grace is the Preparative and Assurance of Glory: For altho the Saints are in themselves mutable, and while there remains Corruption within, and a tempting World without, are liable to falling away, yet the free and powerful Love of God that revived them when dead, will preserve them living; that which raised them from the Grave, will prevent their relapsing into it. *The Gifts of God are without Repentance.* How triumphantly does the Apostle
Rom. 8. express his Confidence, *Who shall separate us from the Love of God? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword?* These are the most powerful Terrors that

that the perverſe World, in combination with the Devil, can make uſe of to conſtrain us to deſert the Service of God; but they are vain. *Nay, in all theſe things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us: For I am perſwaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things preſent, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God, that is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* This bleſſed Aſſurance of the Apoſtle is not rais'd from his extraordinary Privileges, not from the apparition of Angels to him, nor his rapture to Paradiſe, nor ſpecial Revelations, but from the Love of God in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, that everlaſtingly embraces all his Children. Briefly, in that God has

has given his Son to die for us, and his Spirit to live in us, his Son to purchaſe and prepare Heaven for us, his Spirit to prepare us for Heaven, a dying Saint may with bleſſed Tranquillity commend his Soul into God's Hands.

I have more particularly conſidered the Fatherly Love of God, what a ſtrong Security it affords to his Children, that he will never leave them, in that no Point requires and deſerves more Confirmation, and weight of Argument to preſs it down into our diſtruſtful Hearts.

2. The Divine Truth affords a ſtrong Security to the Children of God, to commend their Souls to him at laſt. Truth is an Attribute as eſſential and dear to God as any of his Perfections. And in the Accompliſhment of our Salvation, he ordered all things

things becoming to his Wisdom, that is for the illustration of all his principal Attributes, and accordingly design'd the Glory of his Truth equally with the Honour of his Mercy. Thus he declares to his chosen People, *Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy, with them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* Deut. 7. 9. The Attribute that is set next to the Deity, as most sacred, is the *Faithful God*; and that further express'd, *keeping Covenant and Mercy*; for he delights in fulfilling his Promises, as in the freest Acts of Mercy. The Psalmist breaks forth with the affectionate Praises of these Attributes, *I will worship towards thy holy Temple, and praise thy Name for thy loving Kindness and thy Truth: for thou hast magnified* Psal. 138. 2

nified thy Word above all thy Name. His Word here immediately signifies his Promise, that has its rise from his loving Kindness, and its performance from his Truth. This he magnifies both with respect to the matter of his Promises that are exceeding great and precious, and the fulfilling them above all that we can ask or think. God cannot *repent or lie*; his Counsels are unretractable, from the Immutability of his Nature; his Promises are infallible, from his Fidelity: they are as unchange-
Jer. 31. 35. able as the Sun and Stars in their appointed Courses; nay, more stable than the Centre: *for Heaven and Earth shall pass away*, but not a tittle of his Promises, and our Hopes be unfulfilled. If the Frame of Nature were dissolved, it would be no loss to God, who is glorious and blessed in

in his own Perfections: but if his Promiſes fail, the Honour of his Truth would be impair'd and blemiſh'd. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, *Thoſe that know thy Name, will truſt in thee:* Thoſe who know the Creature, its Levity, Mutability and Mortality, will be diſcourag'd from truſting in it; but thoſe who know the eternal Conſtancy of God in his Nature and Promiſes, will ſecurely rely upon him.

Now the Promiſes, the Declarations of God's Love, without which we cannot have any ſolid and ſuſtaining Hope in our Death, aſſure us of God's receiving the ſeparate Spirits of his Children. There was a conſtant clearneſs, tho not in that degree of Light as ſince the appearance of Chriſt, of the Happineſs of the departed Saints. Dying *Jacob* breaks forth with a lively Hope,

Gen. 49. 18. Hope, *O Lord, I have waited for thy Salvation.* *Job* says, *Tho he kill me, yet will I truſt in him*; that is, for his Almighty Mercy in the next State. The Pſalmiſt expreſſes his Confidence,

Pſal. 73. 24 *Thou wilt guide me by thy Counſel, and receive me into thy Glory.* After the ſafe conducting him through a World of Troubles and Temptations, he would bring him to Heaven, a Place of equal Purity and Glory. *David* when he was in preſſing Pe-

Pſal. 31. 5. ril, addreſſes to God, *Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, to be preſerved as a precious Depoſitum; *thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.* His Aſſurance is built on God's Right and Title to him, *Thou haſt redeemed me*, and his everlaſting Fidelity. The Apoſtle ſpeaks

2 Cor. 5. 1. with full aſſurance, *We know that if our earthly Houſe of this Taber-*

Tabernacle be diſſolved, we have a Building of God eternal in the Heavens. And, *we are confident, I ſay, rather to be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord.* St. *Peter* encourages Chriſtians when ſurrounded with Death, *to commit their Souls to him:* 1 Pet. 4. 1. *Wherefore let them that ſuffer according to the Will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in wel-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* He encourageth them to encounter Death in its moſt formidable Pomp, by conſidering their Souls ſhall be ſafe for ever, upon the account of God's Right and Intereſt in them, and his Fidelity: he has an original Right in them by the firſt Creation, as they are intellectual immortal Spirits in their Nature, but a nearer and more eſpecial Right by a new and nobler Creation, as they are re-

renewed Spirits, made like to him in his Holineſs, the moſt Divine Perfection. The Relation of Creator implies his omnipotent Love, and the Attribute of Faithful, his eternal Love declar'd in his Promiſes. There can never be the leaſt cauſe to charge him with Inſincerity or Inconſtancy. The
Pſal. 5. *Favour of God is round about the Righteous as a Shield: And his*
Pſal. 89. *Faithfulneſs is round about him,* that he is always ready to perform his Promiſe to them. They may ſafely truſt the worth of their Souls, and the weight of Eternity with him, who has ſaid, *he will never leave them, nor forſake them.*

Beſides, the Promiſe of a Reward to the obedient Children of God, is ſecur'd not only by his Fidelity, but the declar'd Equity of his Proceedings in his

his final Judgment. 'Tis a Regality inveſted in the Crown of Heaven to diſpenſe Rewards: *Whoever comes to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Heb. 11. 6. His Being and rewarding Bounty are the Foundations of Religion. 'Tis true, ſuch is the Diſtance between God and the Creature, and the eternal Obligations of it to God, that it can challenge nothing from God, as due to its Merit. Juſtice unqualified with Bounty and Clemency, owes nothing to the moſt excellent Obedience of the Creature, tho innocent. But ſince the Fall, our beſt Works are defective and defiled, and want Pardon; and our heavieſt Sufferings are but light in the Ballance, againſt the exceeding Weight of Glory. But the Apoſtle tells the Theſſalonians, *It is*

a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation to them who trouble you: and to you who are troubled, rest with us. Consider them in the Comparison; 'Tis becoming his governing Justice to punish the unrighteous Persecutors, and reward his faithful Servants who suffer for his Glory. Now the present Life is the Day for our Work, as our Saviour saith, *I must do the Work of him that sent me, while 'tis called to Day:* And at Death, the *Spirit returns to God that gave it*, in order to Judgment, either fatal or favourable, according to the tenor of Mens good Works, and the desert of their bad. The Promise is *to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing,* Rom. 2. *seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, they shall obtain eternal Life.* Our Saviour encourages his suffering Servants, *Be faith-*

faithful to the Death, and I will give you the Crown of Life. The compleat Reward is reserved to the great Day of universal Recompences, when the Sons of God by Regeneration, shall be the Sons of a glorious Resurrection. But the righteous Judg will give a present Reward at the end of the Day, to all that with unfainting Perseverance have perform'd his Work. Our Saviour tells us, that all who wrought in the Vineyard, receiv'd their Rewards *in the last Hour of the Day*: The Parallel is instructive, that when the Night of Death comes, the Reward will be dispens'd. There is a Law recorded concerning the paying Wages to those who were hir'd, that it should be in the end of the Day; that it should not be detain'd *all Night with thee until the Morning.* The

Luke 20. 35.

Mat. 20. 9.

Deut. 24. 15.

Alluſion is very congruous; that God will fulfil his own Law to his Sons that ſerve him. The Reward ſhall not abide with him the long dark Interval, the Night, wherein their Bodies ſleep in the Grave, till the Morning of the Reſurrection. Our Saviour promiſed the dying Penitent, *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe. The End of our Faith* is immediately attended *with the Salvation of the Soul:* The Labour of Faith being finiſh'd, is productive of the beatifick Viſion in the State of Light and Glory. The Sum is, That the Children of God, who have by conſtant Converſation ſincerely endeavoured to pleaſe and glorify him, may with an entire Reſignation commit their Souls to his Hands, as if an Angel were ſent from Heaven to them in their dying Agonies, with the

the comfortable Meſſage, that they ſhould preſently be with God.

3. The Divine Power, in conjunction with Love and Truth, is the Foundation of our ſecure dependance upon God in our laſt Hours. This Conſideration is abſolutely neceſſary for our ſure Truſt: For Love without Power is ineffectual, and Power without Love of no comfortable Advantage to us. The Apoſtle gives this reaſon of his chearful and couragious Sufferings in the Service of God, *For I know in whom I have believed, and am perſwaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him, till that Day.* His Faith reſpected the Promiſes of God concerning his Salvation, which are infinitely ſure, the Divine Power being alſufficient to fulfil them. The precious Depoſitum that is com- 2 Tim. 1.

mitted to his dear Care, he can and will preſerve inviolate. The Father of ſincere Believers, is *the Lord of Heaven and Earth*, who by his Word, without the leaſt ſtrain of his Power, made the World, and preſerves it from falling into Confuſion. 'Tis the Eſſence of Faith, to aſſure us of God's Almighty Mercy to all that have the true Characters of his Children, that are qualified for his Salvation. Our Redeemer joins the two Relations of *our Father and our God*; the gracious and the glorious Relation are inſeparable. Now the Love of our heavenly Father engages the Power of our God, that we ſhall want nothing to ſecure our Happineſs, that is within the object of Omnipotence.

I ſhall inſiſt no further upon the Conſideration of the Divine Power,

Power, because it will return under some of the following Heads of Discourse.

II. The Blessedness of this Privilege is to be unfolded. This will appear by considering,

First, What is the Depositum, the Thing that is intrusted in God's Hands.

Secondly, What is implied in his receiving of it.

In answer to the first; 'Tis the Soul, the more excellent and immortal Part of Man, that is commended to God's keeping.

1. 'Tis our more excellent Part in its Nature and Capacity. Man is a compounded Creature, of a Body and a Soul: the Body in its Original and Resolution is Earth; the Soul is of a divine Descent, a spiritual Substance, and in the Nobility and Perfections of its Nature,

but *a little lower than the Angels:* 'tis *the vile Body, but the precious Soul.*

In its Capacity it incomparably excels the Body; for the Body lives & moves in the low Region of the Senses, that are common with the Worms of the Earth; but the Soul in its Understanding and Desires, is capable of Communion with the blessed God, of Grace and Glory. From hence it is, that the whole World can't make one Man happy; for the Ingredients of true and compleat Happiness are the Perfection and Satisfaction of the Soul. The Apostle tells us, *The less is blessed of the greater.* Can the World bring Perfection to Man, that is so incomparably short of his Imperfection? Our Saviour assures us, *the Gain of the whole World cannot recompense the Loss of one Soul,*

There

There is a vaſt Circuit in our Deſires, and all the Lines terminate in the Centre of Bleſſedneſs. Can the World give ſincere Satisfaction to them? *Solomon* who was as rich and high as the World could make him, has left an everlaſting Teſtimony of the Vanity of tranſient Things, from his experimental Obſervation, and the Direction of the Holy Spirit: So he begins and ends his Sermon, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*; ſo vain and vexing, that we ſhall not only be weary of them, but of this Life, wherein we uſe them. Can the Creature make us happy, when their Emptineſs, and Anguiſh annex'd to it, makes our Lives miſerable? The World cannot ſatisfy our narrow Senſes: *The Eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing*, much leſs the infinite

Eccleſ. 1. 1. & 12. 8.

Eccl. 1. 17.

nite Desires of our supreme Faculties. Those who are now inchanted with its Allurements, within a little while will see through its false Colours. As when one awakes, all the pleasant Scenes of Fancy in his Dream vanish; so when the Soul is awakened in the End of Life, *the World and the Lusts thereof pass away*, and the remembrance of them.

I shall add further; What clearer Evidence can we have of the worth of the Soul, than from God's Esteem, the Creator of it? Now when God foresaw the Revolture of our first Parent, that brought him under a double Death in one Sentence, temporal and eternal, and that all Mankind was desperately lost in him, then his compassionate Counsels were concerning his Recovery; His Love and Wisdom

dom accorded to contrive the Means to accompliſh our Redemption, by the Death of his incarnate Son: *We are not redeemed with Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Chriſt, as a Lamb without ſpot and blemiſh.* 1 Pet. 1. Of what value is a Soul in God's account, that he bought with his own Son's Blood, the moſt ſacred Treaſure of Heaven? We may ſay for the Honour of our Redeemer and our own, that which the Angels cannot, we were ſo valued by God himſelf, that his Son became Man, and died on the Croſs for the Salvation of our Souls. I ſhall only mention another Evidence and Effect of God's valuation of our Souls, that is, *the eternal Weight of Glory*, which exceeds all the Thoughts of our Minds, and Deſires of our Hearts. What-

O anima! erige te, tanti vales: *Aug.* in Pſal. 103.

are

are all the Kingdoms and Pleasures of the World, in comparison of that Blessedness God has prepar'd *for those who love him?* Now the Soul that is inestimably precious, and should be most dear to us, is secured from Danger, when received by God's Hands.

2. The Soul is our immortal Part. The Body is compounded of jarring Principles, frail and mortal: A Casualty or Sickness dissolves the vital Union, and it falls to the Dust. But the Soul is a Spirit by Nature, and immortal by its inherent Property. Its spiritual Operations perform'd without the ministry of the Senses, (the Eye of the Mind contemplates its Objects, when the Eyes of the Body are clos'd) demonstrate its spiritual Nature: for the Being is the Root of its working, and consequently

quently that it exists independently upon the Body: But of this we have the cleareſt aſſurance in the Scripture. This is another demonſtration that preſent Things cannot make us happy, for they forſake us the firſt ſtep we take into the next World, and then the Soul enters into Happineſs or Miſery equally eternal. The Immortality of the Soul, and the Immutability of its State, are inſeparable then; for the preſent Life is the time of our Work, the next is of Recompences according to our Works. *If we die in the Lord,* the Conſequence is infallible, we ſhall live with him for ever: If we die in our Sins, we ſhall not be received by his merciful Hands, but fall into his bottomleſs Diſpleaſure. And of what concernment is it to have our Souls with God in that infinite

infinite and incomprehensible Duration? All the Measures of Time, Days and Weeks, Months and Years, and Ages, are swallow'd up in that invisible Depth, as the Rivers that pour into the Sea, are swallowed up without any overflowing of its Waters. The Dove that *Noah* let out of the Ark, as a Spy to discover whether the Deluge was abated, found not a Place to rest on; but after many Circuits in the Air, it returned to the Ark. If our Thoughts take wing, and multiply Millions of Millions of Ages, we cannot rest in any Computation, for there remains after all an entire innumerable Eternity.

Secondly, I will consider more particularly what is contained in this blessed Privilege: The reception of the Soul into God's Hands,

Hands, implies three things.

1. Entire Safety.

2. Heavenly Felicity.

3. 'Tis a certain Pledg of the reviving of the Body, and its reunion with the Soul in the State of Glory.

1. Entire Safety. After Death the ſeparate Soul of a true Believer immediately paſſes through the airy and Ethereal Regions to the higheſt Heaven, the Temple of God, the native Seat and Element of bleſſed Spirits. The Air is poſſeſs'd by Satan with his Confederate Army, who are Rebels to God, and Enemies to the Souls of Men: he is ſtiled *the Prince of the Power of the Air*: He often raiſes Storms and Tempeſts, diſcharges Thunder and Lightning, the woful Effects of which are felt in the lower World. The Numbers, the Strength, and the Malice of the

Ephes. 2.

the evil Angels to the Souls of Men, render them very terrible: We may conjecture at their Number, from what is related
Mark 5. in the Gospel, that *a Legion possess'd one Man.* They are superiour Spirits to Man, and tho stripp'd of their moral Excellencies, Holiness, Goodness and Truth, yet retain their natural Power at least in great degrees. Their Malice is unquenchable. 'Tis said of the Devil, *He goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.* All the Joy those malignant Spirits are capable of, is the involving the Souls of Men in their desperate Calamity. And tho they know their opposing God will increase their Guilt and Torment, yet their Diligence is equal to their Malice, to seduce, pervert and ruin Souls for ever. Now when the Saints

Saints die, all the Powers of Darkneſs would, if poſſible, hinder the aſcenſion of their Souls to God. What *David* complains of his cruel Enemies, is applicable in this caſe, *Their Souls are among Lions*; and if deſtitute of divine Preſervation, the Danger would be the ſame; as if a little Flock of Lambs were to encounter with a great number of fierce Lions, or fiery Dragons. Anger ſets an edg upon Power, and makes a Combatant but of equal Strength to overcome. How dangerous then would the Condition be of naked Souls, oppos'd by overmatching Enemies, armed with Rage againſt them? How eaſily would they hurry them to *the Abyſs*, the Den of Dragons, the Priſon where loſt Souls are ſecur'd to the Day of Judgment?

But all the Potentates of Hell

are infinitely inferiour to God: they are restrain'd and tortur'd by the Chains of his powerful Justice: a Legion of them could not enter into the Swine without his permission, much less can they touch *the Apple of his Eye*. That black Prince with all his infernal Host cannot intercept one naked Soul from arriving at the Kingdom of Glory. Our Saviour assures us, *None is able to pluck them out of his Father's Hands*. The Lord Christ our Head and Leader, having vanquish'd in his last Battel on the Cross, Principalities and Powers, made his triumphant Ascension to Glory: Thus his Members having overcome their spiritual Enemies, shall by the same Almighty Power be carried through the Dominions of Satan, *in the sight of their Enemies*, (tormented with the remembrance

John 10.

membrance of their loſt Happineſs, and Envy that humane Souls ſhould partake of it) to the Place of God's glorious Reſidence.

I ſhall alſo obſerve, that as the Lord is a God of Power, ſo he is a God of Order, and uſes ſubordinate Means for the accompliſhment of his Will. Our Saviour has reveal'd, that the Angels tranſport the ſeparate Souls of the Righteous to Heaven: Thoſe glorious Spirits, who always behold the Face of God, ſuch is their exact Obedience to him, and perfect Love to his Children, that they diſdain not to protect his little ones in this open State. They *rejoice* Mat. 18. 10
at the Converſion of Sinners, at their firſt entrance into the Way of Life, and with tender watchfulneſs encompaſs them here, never withdrawing their pro-

tecting Preſence, till they bring them to their celeſtial Country, and reſign their Charge to the Lord of Life. How ſafe are the departed Saints, when convey'd through Satan's Territories by the Royal Guard of Angels *that excel in ſtrength?*

2. Heavenly Felicity. The receiving of holy Souls into God's Hands, is introductive into his Preſence, which is both a Sanctuary to ſecure us from all Evil, and a Store-houſe to furniſh us with all that is good. *The Lord is a Sun and a Shield:* he is to intellectual Beings, what the Sun is to ſenſitive, communicates Light and Life, and Joy to them. *In his Preſence is fulneſs of Joy, at his right Hand are Rivers of Pleaſure for ever.* Pſal. 16. 11 All that is evil and afflicting, is aboliſh'd: all that is deſirable, is conferr'd upon his Children.

A glimpse or reflected Ray of his reconciled and favourable Countenance, even in this lower World, infuses into the Hearts of his Children a *Joy unspeakable and glorious:* a taste of the Divine Goodness here, causes a disrelish of all the carnal Sweets, the dreggy Delights which natural Men so greedily desire. And if the faint Dawn be so reviving and comfortable, what is the Brightness of the full Day? None can understand the Happiness that results from the full and eternal sight of God's Face, and the fruition of his Love, but those who enjoy the Presence of God in perfection. His Goodness is truly infinite; the more the Saints above know it, and enjoy it, the more they esteem it, and delight in it. His compleat and communicative Love satisfies the immense Desires of

that innumerable Company of bleſſed Spirits that are before his Throne: there is no Envy, no Avarice, no Ambition in that Kingdom, where *God is all in all.*

The Divine Preſence is an ever-flowing Fountain of Felicity. The continual reflection upon this, makes Heaven to be Heaven to the Bleſſed: their Security is as valuable as their Felicity: they are above all danger of loſing it. Methinks the belief of this ſhould cauſe us, as it were with Wings of Fire, with moſt ardent Deſires to fly to the Boſom of God, the alone Centre of our Souls, where we ſhall reſt for ever.

3. The reception of the Soul into Heaven is a certain Pledg of the Reſurrection of the Body, and its re-union with the Soul in the State of Glory. The Covenant of God was made with

the entire Persons of Believers: therefore under the Law the sacred Seal of it was in their Flesh. To be the God of Promise to them, implies his being a blessed Rewarder to them. Our Saviour silences the Sadduces, who disbeliev'd the Resurrection, from the tenour of God's Covenant, *I am the God of* Abraham, *and* Isaac, *and* Jacob, which Title he was pleased to retain after their Death; *Now God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living.* The immediate Inference from thence is, that their Souls did actually live in Blessedness, and that their Bodies, tho dead to Nature, were alive to God with respect to his Promise and Power. If we consider that the Divine Law binds the outward Man as well as the inward, and that during the time of our Work and Trial

here, our Service and Sufferings for the Glory of God are from the concurrence of the Soul and Body, it will appear that the Promise of the Reward belongs to both, and that the receiving of the Soul into Heaven, is an earnest of our full Redemption, even that of the Body. 'Tis true, there is no visible Difference between the Bodies of the Saints and of the Wicked here; they are sick with the same Diseases, and die in the same manner. As 'tis with Trees in deep Winter, when they are covered with Snow, we cannot distinguish which are absolutely dead and destin'd to the Ax and Fire, and which retain their Sap, and will be fruitful and flourishing in the returning Year: so the dead Bodies of the Godly and Ungodly, to external appearance, are alike: But what a vast

diffe-

difference will be between them in the next World! The Bodies of the Ungodly, in conjunction with their Souls, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire; the Bodies of the Godly resumed by their Souls, shall enjoy a full and flourishing Happiness for ever.

The Application.

1. This may inform us of the contrary States into which dying Persons immediately pass: The Children of God resign their Spirits to the Hands of their gracious Heavenly Father, but Rebels and Strangers to God, fall *into the Hands of* a revenging Judg. Could we see the attending Spirits that surround sick Persons in their last Hours, what a wonderful Impression would it make upon us? A Guard of glorious Angels convey

convey the departed Saints to the Bosom of God's Love, and the Kingdom of his Glory. But when the Wicked die, a Legion of Furies seize upon their expected Prey, and hurry them to the infernal Prison, from whence there is no redemption.

How many Rebels and open Enemies to God are in the Pale of the Christian Church? They will loudly repeat, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, notwithstanding the impudent and palpable Atheism of their Lives: they live as if they were independent, and not accountable to him *who will judg the World without respect of Persons.* The more strict his Commands are, the Contempt of them is more visible. Our Saviour's Prohibition is peremptory, *I say unto you, Swear not at all:* but how many make no more conscience

of

of Swearing than they do of Speaking, and pour forth Oaths of all fashions and sizes. We are severely forbid all degrees of Impurity, in the Look, in Words, or in Wish; yet how many without reflection or remorse, continue in the deepest Pollutions! We are commanded to *live soberly in this present World*; yet how many indulge their swinish Appetites, and debase themselves even below the Beasts that perish. And as the sensual Appetites are notoriously predominant in some, so the angry Appetite is tyrannous in others. Pride, Wrath, Revenge, possess the Breasts of many: How often for a slight, or but reputed Injury, they are so fir'd with Passion, that their hot Blood cannot be satisfied without the cold Blood of their Enemies. In short, many live in such open defi-

defiance of the Divine Law, as if there were no God to see and punish their Sins, or as if they would make a trial whether he will be true to his Threatning, and revenge their bold Impieties: They are partly worse than Brutes; for having an understanding Faculty, a Principle of Reason, they submit it to Sense: and partly worse than Devils; for as the Devils, they rebel against God, and yet not, as they, tremble in their Rebellion. Now when Death is ready with its cold Hands to close their Eyes, and Conscience awakes out of its Slumber, what Horrors seize upon them! They are stripp'd of their carnal Securities, the Creature cannot help them, and the Creator will not. They have been Enemies to that Love that made them and preserv'd them, and, not-

notwithſtanding their violent Provocations, has ſpar'd them ſo long. They have rejected that infinitely condeſcending and compaſſionate Love, that ſo tenderly beſeech'd them to be reconciled to God, as if it were his Intereſt to ſave them. Whither will they fly from their Judg? What can reſcue them from inſtant and irrecoverable Miſery? Can they hope that Mercy will be their Advocate? Their Condemnation is ſo righteous, that Mercy cannot diſpenſe with it. *'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God*, who lives for ever, and can puniſh for ever. Who *knows the Power of his Wrath?* 'Tis boundleſs beyond all our Thoughts and Time. O take notice of this with Terror, *all ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!* Pſal. 50.

Others

Others are not so visibly disobedient as notorious Sinners, but are as really. You may see their Picture in the disobedient Son, mentioned by our Saviour in the Gospel, who *when his Father commanded him to go work in the Vineyard, answered, I go, Sir, and went not.* 'Tis true, they perform the external part of some Duties, and abstain from the gross acts of some Sins, but 'tis with an exception and a reserve. A Duty that is contrary to their carnal Appetites and Interest, they will not perform; a Sin that bribes them with Profit or Pleasure, a temperamental Sin, they will not part with. Now any indulged habitual Lust *is not the Spot of God's Children,* but denominates the Sinner a Child of the Devil: for tho the Saints till they are devested of frail Flesh, have their

Matth. 21. 28, 30.

their Allays, and cannot be exempt from the relicks of Sin; yet the Divine Nature communicated to them, is oppoſite to every Sin, and is an active Principle to ſubdue Sin.

And from hence S. *John* tells us, *He that is born of God, cannot ſin*, that is, deliberately and habitually: Such Sinners, tho in the Hour of Death they may addreſs with all the applying Titles, *Our Father, and our God*, ſhall ever be excluded from his ſacred and ſaving Protection.

2. Let us ſeriouſly conſider whether we are of this ſpiritual Progeny, the Children of God, not only in Title, but in Reality. The Inquiry is of infinite moment; for all the Promiſes and Priviledges of the Goſpel are annex'd to this Sonſhip: This ſecures us from *the Wrath to come*, and entitles us to

to the eternal Inheritance; *Fear*
Luke 12. *not, little Flock, 'tis your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* This Inquiry is very useful to calm and quiet the troubled Saints, and to awaken unregenerate Persons out of their confident Dream of their good State. Many sincere Christians are infinitely concern'd whether they are the Children of God; of this their Tears and Fears give abundant evidence. The reasons of their Doubts are partly the Jealousy of their own Hearts, which are naturally *deceitful above all things*, and most deceitful to a Man's self; and partly from the consequence of the Deceit: for knowing the inestimable value of this Privilege, *to be the Sons of God*, and that if they are deceived in it, they are undone for ever, they are anxiously thoughtful about

it.

it. But carnal Persons who are not acquainted with the Hypocrisy of their Hearts, nor duly understand the excellence of the Privilege, easily believe what they coldly desire. And the great deceiver of Souls is equally subtile to varnish what is evil with the false colours of Good, and to conceal what is good under the appearance of Evil. From hence it is, that many tender-spirited Christians are timorous, and full of unquiet Agitations all their Lives: and many who have but a shew and fair pretence of Religion, are undisturb'd and hopeful, till at last they fall from their supposed Heaven and high Hopes, into the Abyss of Misery.

This Trial will be most clear and convincing, by representing from Scripture the inseparable Properties and Characters of the

Children of God, that distinguish them from all that are in the State of unrenewed Nature. The Apostle tells sincere Christians, *The Spirit it self witnesses with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* Here is a Consent and Agreement of those Witnesses, in whom are all that is requisite to give value to their Testimony. For the Spirit of God, such is his unerring Knowledg, *who searches the deep things of God*, and such is the absolute Sanctity of his Nature, that he can neither deceive nor be deceived, so that his Testimony is infinitely sure, and of more worth than the concurrent Testimony of Heaven and Earth, of Angels and Men. The other Witness is the renewed Conscience, that is acquainted with the Aims and Affections of the Heart, as the Apostle saith,

Who

Who knows the things of a Man, save the Spirit of a Man? This Faculty reflects upon our Actions, and the Principles of them: to this Faculty is referr'd the decision of our spiritual State; *If our Hearts condemn us not* of any allowed Sin, *then have we Peace towards God.* From the consent and agreement of these Witnesses, there is a blessed Assurance of our Evangelical Sonship, that overcomes all our Fears. Now this Testimony is rational and argumentative, from the discovery of those Graces that constitute a Person the Child of God. I will make the Inquiry concerning the Grace of Faith and of Love, which are the vital Bands of our Union with Christ, the principal Fruits of the sanctifying Spirit, and the Symptoms of Salvation. 1 John

(1.) The Grace of Faith is ex-
Joh. 1. 12. preſs'd in Scripture by *receiving of Chriſt*: this anſwers to God's offer of him to our acceptance in the Goſpel. It receives him entirely in his Perſon and Natures, as the incarnate Son of God; and in his Office, as *a Prince*
Acts 5. 31. *and Saviour, to give Repentance and remiſſion of Sins.* This receiving Chriſt implies an Act of the Underſtanding and the Will; the Underſtanding aſſents to the Truth of the Divine Revelation, that Chriſt crucified is an alſufficient Saviour; and the Will cloſes with the Terms of it, *that he will ſave to the uttermoſt all that obey him*: From hence it follows, that reliance upon him, and a ſincere reſolution to obey him, are neceſſarily included in ſaving Faith. This Scripture-Account diſtinguiſhes between

that

that ſubſtantial Faith that is proper to the elect Children of God, and the Shadow of it in the Unregenerate; the one is the intimate and active Principle of Obedience, the other is a dead Aſſent without Efficacy, a mere Carcaſs and Counterfeit of Faith. A ſincere Believer as fervently deſires to be ſaved from the Dominion and Pollution of his Sins, as from the Guilt and deadly Malignity: a carnal Man deſires an Intereſt in Chriſt as a Saviour, that he may ſecurely enjoy his Luſts.

The crafty and curſed Serpent deceives Men to their ruine, by citing Scripture, and miſapplying it. The Promiſe is ſure, *Whoever believes, ſhall be ſaved*; and he eaſily perſwades them they are Believers. 'Tis ſtrange to aſtoniſhment, that Men who have Rea-

ſon and Underſtanding, ſhould preſume in a high degree of the preſent Favour of God, and their future Happineſs, as if they were his dear Children, when their Enmity againſt his holy Name and Will is evident in their Actions.

We can never have too firm a dependance on God's Promiſe, when we are qualified for that Dependance. *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18. Faith that purifies the Heart and Converſation, inveſts us with this bleſſed Privilege, and all the ſaving Mercies annex'd to it.

(2.) From the ſpiritual Relation between God and Believers, there naturally and neceſſarily

ſarily reſults a ſincere, dutiful, child-like Love to him, correſpondent to his beneficent and fatherly Love to them: This God indiſpenſably requires, and ſpecially delights in; *Thou loveſt Truth in the inward Parts.* Pſal. 51. Filial Obedience is inſeparable from filial Love in its Reality: *For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* 1 Joh. 5. 3. Our Saviour diſtinguiſhes between ſincere Lovers of him, and pretended, that *they who love him, keep his Commandments; but they who love him not, keep not his Commandments.* John 14. 23, 24.

The Obedience that ſprings from Love to God, is uniform, reſpects all his Commands: for the two filial Affections, an ardent Deſire to pleaſe God in all things, and an ingenuous Fear of diſpleaſing him in any thing, are inſeparably joined with

our Love to him.

The Obedience that proceeds from Love, is free and voluntary, from Inclination as well as Duty. How passionately does the holy Psalmist express his Affection, *O how I love thy Law!* In the Covenant of Grace, God promises to *write his Law in the Hearts of his Children*; not only in their Minds and Memories, but to endear it to their Affections. There is much difference between servile and constrain'd Obedience, and filial chosen Obedience, as between the Motion of a living Man from the Soul, the inward Spring of Life, and the Motion of an Image or Statue from forcible Weights and Wheels.

Heb. 8. 10.

From filial Love proceeds godly Sorrow, if at any time by Carelessness and Surprize, or an over-powering Temptation,

on, his Children do what is offenſive and odious in his ſight. When they conſider their unkind and unthankful Returns for his Mercies, they look to their Heavenly Father with Grief and Shame, and down upon themſelves with Abhorrence and Indignation: They are wounded with the ſting of that Expoſtulation, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh People and unwiſe? Is he not thy Father who bought thee?* Deut. 32.6

From filial Love proceeds a Zeal for his Glory; *If I be a Father, where is my Honour?* A Child of God is dearly concerned that his Name be reverenced and magnified, his Laws be obſerved, his Worſhip maintained, that his Intereſt be advanced in the World. He has a burning Zeal againſt Sin and preſumptuous Sinners. Pſal. 69. The Pro-

Prophet *Elijah* says, *I have been jealous for the Lord of Hosts: for the Children of* Israel *have forsaken thy Covenant, and thrown down thine Altars.* Those who with an indifferent Eye see the Cause, the Truth, the Interest of God depress'd in the World, do renounce the Title of his Children.

From the Relation to God as his Sons, proceeds a sincere fervent Love to all the Saints. St. 1 Joh. 5. 1. *John* infers, *Every one that loveth him that begat, loves him that is begotten.* Grace is not less powerful in producing cordial mutual Affections between the Children of the same Heavenly Father, than the subordinate Endearments of Nature. Notwithstanding the civil Distinction between them, some high and rich, others mean and poor, yet there is a spiritual Equa-

Equality; the loweſt Saints are Princes of the Blood-Royal of Heaven. *To him that has waſhed us from our Sins in his Blood, and made us Kings and Prieſts to God, be Glory for ever.* Revel. 1.

The filial Relation to God inclines and encourages all ſincere Chriſtians to reſign themſelves, even in their moſt afflicted Condition, to the Wiſdom and Will of God. Our Saviour meekly yielded up himſelf to his cruel Enemies, upon this Conſideration, *The Cup which my Father has given me, ſhall I not drink it?* Joh. 18. 11 The Saints in imitation of Chriſt, and upon the ſame Ground, entirely reſign themſelves to the Divine Diſpoſal; for their Heavenly Father loves them better than they can love themſelves.

Finally, The filial Relation to God is productive as of live-

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ly Hopes, so of ardent Desires to be with him. Love makes them to esteem Communion with him here in his holy Ordinances, as the Joy of their Lives. The Psalmist when banish'd from the Tabernacle, breaks forth in his impatient De-
Psal. 43. sires, *When shall I come and appear before God?* that is, in the Place where he communicates his Grace to those that worship him. But our Father is in Heaven as his Throne, and most gloriously exhibits himself to his Saints there. The Earth is the Element and Residence of carnal Men, of their Souls as well as their Bodies: They desire their *Inheritance may be on this side* Jordan, and are content to leave the Heavenly *Canaan* to those who like it. But those who *are born from above*, desire *to be dissolved*, that they may be

be in their Father's Houſe, and his reviving Preſence for ever.

3. Let us be perſwaded to prepare for the reception of our Souls in the next World. The preſent Life is a Paſſage to Eternity, and 'tis ſo ſhort and fading, ſo uncertain and hazardous, that 'tis our principal Wiſdom without delay to ſecure our Souls in the future State. Our Saviour ſays, *I muſt work the Work of him that ſent me while it is Day: the Night cometh when no Man can work. Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.* 'Tis our indiſpenſable Duty and main Intereſt now, *to work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling.* In the ſtate of Death there is an Incapacity to do any thing in order to Salvation: *There is no Work nor Wiſdom in the Grave:* and all the Offers of Sal- John 9. 4.

Salvation ceaſe for ever. The Sufferings of the Son of God are not a Ranſom for Sinners in that State: *He reconciled things in Earth and in Heaven*, but not things in Hell. The Golden Scepter is extended to none there, the Holy Spirit ſtrives with none, they are without the Reſerves of Mercy. The Guilt of Sin remains in its full Obligation, the Pollution of Sin in its deepeſt Die, and the Puniſhment of Sin in its Extremity for ever.

O what Folly is it, or rather Frenzy, not to provide for our Souls in their greateſt Exigence! Common Reaſon inſtructs us, knowing our own Weakneſs, to commit our Treaſure to the cuſtody of our Friends, which we cannot otherwiſe keep from our Enemies; eſpecially to ſuch a Friend as can and will preſerve

ſerve it for our Uſe and Advantage. The Soul is our Jewel above all Price, 'tis our Wiſdom to ſecure it out of all danger: Let us therefore commit it to the ſafe and ſure Hands of our Heavenly Father, otherwiſe we cannot preſerve it from the infernal Spirits, the Robbers and Murderers of Souls.

The wiſe Preacher denounces a fearful Evil, *Wo be to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.* In all the Senſes of falling, Death is the greateſt Fall: the High, the Honourable, the Rich, fall from all their State; and Men of all Degrees are forſaken of all their carnal Comforts and Supports. If then the ſolitary Soul has not a God to receive, ſupport and comfort it, how woful is its Condition! Methinks the apprehenſion of this Eccl. 4. 10.

this ſhould ſtrike a Terror ſo deep into the Hearts of Men, that they ſhould be reſtleſs till they have ſecur'd a Retreat for their departing Souls.

For this end let us, according to the earneſt Advice of St. *Pe-*
2 Pet. 3. *ter, be diligent, that we may be found of him in Peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.*

The Lord Jeſus is the only Peace-maker of the righteous and holy God to Sinners. The Judg of this World is flaming with Wrath, and terrible in Vengeance to Sinners that appear before his Tribunal out of Chriſt. We ſhall for ever be excluded from his bleſſed Communion, without the Mediator reſtore us to his Favour. Our
Col. 1. 20. Reconciliation only is by *Redemption in his Blood. The Cha-*
Iſa. 53. *ſtiſement of our Peace was upon him.* He is *the Lord our Righte-*

ouſneſs,

ouſneſs, by whom alone we can ſtand in Judgment. *God was in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf.* There is now an Act of Oblivion offer'd in the Goſpel to all that come *to God by him.* We have ſure Salvation in his Name: But we muſt with conſenting Wills, cloſe with him as our Lord and Life. The firſt Goſpel preach'd by the Angel after his coming into the World, declares, *There was born in the City of* David *a Saviour, Chriſt the Lord.* We muſt not ſeparate between Chriſt the Saviour, and Chriſt the Lord; between his Salvation and his Dominion. God indiſpenſably requires we ſhould reſign our ſelves to his Son as our King, and rely upon him as our Prieſt to atone his Diſpleaſure. If we thus receive him, he will reſtore us to the Favour and Peace of God, eſtabliſht in an everlaſting Covenant.

How tenderly and compassionately does the great God invite Sinners to re-enter into his Favour, *to acquaint our selves with him, and to be at peace! His Embassadours in his Name, and in Christ's stead beseech them to be reconciled to God.* But their perverse Spirits would *have God reconciled to them,* that they might be exempt from Punishment; but are *unwilling to be reconciled to him,* to part with their Lusts. In short, reconciliation with God necessarily infers defiance with Sin. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.* If Men do not cease their Rebellion, there is no shadow of hope to obtain the Divine Favour.

Do ye provoke the Lord to Jealousie, are you stronger than he? Jealousie is the most sensible and severe Affection. As 'tis with a Town taken by storm, all that are found in Arms are without

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Mercy cut off; ſo all that at Death are found with the *weapons of unrighteouſneſs*, their unrepented unforſaken Sins about them, muſt expect *Judgment without Mercy.*

Laſtly, Let the Children of God be encouraged with Peace and Joy to commend their Souls to him. Let rebellious Sinners tremble with deadly Fear upon the brink of Eternity; but let the Saints, with a lively Hope, enter into the Divine World.

If Men poſſeſs their Treaſure with Joy and Jealouſie, and guard it with vigilant Care, will not God preſerve his deareſt Treaſure, the Souls of his Children committed to his Truſt?

Can Love forſake, can Truth deceive, can Almighty Power fail? Will a Father, a heavenly Father, be without Bowels to his own Off-ſpring? No, he cannot deny

himſelf: he is readieſt to relieve, when they are in diſtreſs.

Old *Simeon* is a leading Example to Believers: after he had embraced Chriſt in his Armes, how earneſtly did he deſire his Diſſolution? *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.* St. *Stephen* in the midſt of a ſhowr of Stones, with a bleſſed Tranquillity, makes his dying Prayer, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit.* If the Fears of humble Souls ariſe in that hour, becauſe they have not the Conſpicuous marks of God's Children, the Graces of the Spirit in that degree of Eminency, as ſome Saints have had: Let them conſider, there are different Ages among the Children of God: ſome are in a ſtate of Infancy and Infirmity; others are more Confirm'd: but the relation is the ſame in all, and gives an intereſt

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in his promiſed Mercy. The weakneſs of their Faith cannot fruſtrate God's faithfulneſs. 'Tis the Sincerity, not the Strength of Grace, that is requiſite to Salvation. If Faith be ſhaking *as a bruiſed reed*, and but kindling as *the ſmoaking flax*, it ſhall be victorious. O that theſe powerfull Comforts may encourage dying Chriſtians to commend their Souls with Ardency and Aſſurance to God, their Father, and Felicity.

I have now finiſht my Diſcourſe upon the Text, and ſhall apply my ſelf to ſpeak of the other Subject, the Reverend Mr. *Richard Baxter*, that Excellent Inſtrument of Divine Grace, to recover and reſtore ſo many revolted Souls to God, out of the Empire of his Enemy: or in the Apoſtles Language, *to tranſlate them from the Kingdom of Darkneſs, in-*

to the Kingdom of his dear Son. I am ſenſible, that in ſpeaking of him I ſhall be under a double Diſadvantage: For thoſe who perfectly knew him, will be apt to think my Account of him to be ſhort and defective, an imperfect Shadow of his reſplendent Vertues: others who were unacquainted with his extraordinary Worth, will from Ignorance or Envy be inclin'd to think his juſt Praiſes to be undue and exceſſive. Indeed if Love could make me eloquent, I ſhould uſe all the moſt lively and graceful Colours of Language to adorn his Memory: but this Conſideration relieves me in the Conſciouſneſs of my Diſability, that a plain Narrative of what Mr. *Baxter* was, and did, will bee a moſt noble Eulogy: and that his ſubſtantial Piety no more needs artificial Oratory to ſet it off, than refined Gold wants Paint

to

to add Luſtre and Value to it.

I ſhall not ſpeak of his Parentage, and his firſt Years; but I muſt not omit a Teſtimony I receiv'd concerning his early Piety. His Father ſaid with Tears of Joy to a Friend, my Son *Richard* I hope was ſanctified from the Womb: for when he was a little Boy in Coats, if he heard other Children in play ſpeak profane Words, he would reprove them to the Wonder of thoſe that heard him.

He had not the Advantage of Academical Education: but by the Divine Bleſſing upon his rare Dexterity and Diligence, his Sacred Knowledge was in that Degree of Eminence, as few in the Univerſity ever arrive to. Not long after his Entrance into the Miniſtry the Civil War began, and the Times rain'd Blood ſo

long, till the languiſhing State of the Kingdom, was almoſt deſperate and incurable. How far he was concern'd as a Chaplain in the Parliament's Army, he has publiſht an Account, and the reaſons of it.

After the War, he was fixt at *Kederminſter*. There his Miniſtry by the Divine Influence, was of admirable Efficacy. The Harveſt anſwer'd the Seed that was ſowed. Before his coming, the Place was like a Piece of dry and barren Earth, onely Ignorance and Profaneneſs as Natives of the Soil were riſe among them; but by the Bleſſing of Heaven upon his Labour and Cultivating, the Face of Paradiſe appear'd there in all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs. Many were tranſlated from the ſtate of polluted Nature, to the ſtate of Grace; and many were advanc'd to higher degrees of Holineſs. The bad were chang'd

chang'd to good, and the good to better. Converſion is the Excellent Work of Divine Grace: the Efficacy of the Means is from the Supreme Mover. But God uſually makes thoſe Miniſters ſucceſsfull in that Bleſſed Work, whoſe principal Deſign and Delight is to glorifie him in the ſaving of Souls. This was the reigning Affection in his Heart; and he was extraordinarily qualified to obtain his End.

His Prayers were an Effuſion of the moſt lively melting Expreſſions, and his intimate ardent Affections to God; from the *abundance of his Heart his Lips ſpake.* His Soul took Wing for Heaven, and rapt up the Souls of others with him. Never did I ſee or hear a holy Miniſter addreſs himſelf to God with more Reverence and Humility, with reſpect to his glorious Greatneſs; never with

with more Zeal and Fervency correspondent to the infinite Moment of his requests; nor with more Filial Affiance in the Divine Mercy.

In his Sermons there was a rare Union of Arguments and Motives to convince the Mind and gain the Heart: All the Fountains of Reason and Perswasion were open to his discerning Eye. There was no resisting the Force of his Discourses without denying Reason and Divine Revelation. He had a marvellous Felicity and Copiousness in speaking. There was a noble Negligence in his Stile: for his great Mind could not stoop to the affected Eloquence of Words: he despis'd flashy Oratory: but his Expressions were clear and powerful, so convincing the Understanding, so entring into the Soul, so engaging the Affections, that those were as deaf as Adders, who were not *charm'd*

by

by so wise a Charmer. He was animated with the Holy Spirit, and breath'd Celestial Fire, to inspire Heat and Life into dead Sinners, and to melt the obdurate in their frozen Tombs. Methinks I still hear him speak those powerfull Words: *A Wretch that is condemn'd to dy to Morrow cannot forget it: And yet poor Sinners, that continually are uncertain to live an Hour, and certain speedily to see the Majesty of the Lord to their unconceivable Joy or Terror, as sure as they now live on Earth, can forget these things for which they have their memory: and which one would think should drown the matters of this World, as the report of a Canon does a Whisper, or as the Sun obscures the poorest Glo-worm. O wonderfull stupidity of an unrenewed Soul! O wonderfull folly and distractedness of the ungodly! That ever*

His Sermon before the House of Commons 1660.

ever Men can forget, I ſay again, that they can forget, Eternal joy, Eternal Woe, and the Eternal God, and the place of their Eternal unchangeable Abodes, when they ſtand even at the door; and there is but the thin Vail of Fleſh between them and that amazing ſight, that Eternal gulph, and they are daily dying and ſtepping in.

Beſides, his wonderfull diligence in Catechizing the particular Families under his Charge, was exceeding uſefull to plant Religion in them. Perſonal inſtruction, and application of Divine Truths, has an excellent advantage and efficacy to inſinuate and infuſe Religion into the Minds and Hearts of Men, and by the Converſion of Parents and Maſters to reform whole Families that are under their immediate direction and government. While he was at *Ke-*

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derminſter he wrote and publiſht that accompliſht Model of an Evangelical Miniſter, ſtyled *Gildas Salvianus*, or the Reform'd Paſtor: In that book, he clears beyond all cavil, That the Duty of Miniſters is not confin'd to their Study and the Pulpit, but that they ſhould make uſe of opportunities to inſtruct Families within their Care, as 'tis ſaid by the Apoſtle, that he had kept back nothing from his Hearers *that was profitable*, *but had taught them publickly*, *and from houſe to houſe*. The Idea of a faithfull Miniſter delineated in that book, was a Copy taken from the Life, from his own zealous Example. His unwearied induſtry to do good to his Flock, was anſwer'd by Correſpondent Love and Thankfulneſs. He was an Angel in their Eſteem. He would often ſpeak with great Complacence of their dear Affections: and a little before

before his Death, said, He believ'd they were more Expressive of kindness to him, than the Christian Converts were to the Apostle *Paul*, by what appears in his Writings.

While he remain'd at *Kederminster*, his Illustrious Worth was not shaded in a Corner, but dispers'd its Beams and Influence round the Countrey. By his Counsel and Excitation, the Ministers in *Worcestershire*, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational were united, that by their Studies, Labours, and Advice, the Doctrine and Practise of Religion, the Truths and Holiness of the Gospel might be preserved in all the Churches committed to their Charge. This Association was of excellent use, the ends of Church-government were obtain'd by it: and it was a leading Example to the Ministers of other Counties. Mr. *Bax-*

Baxter was not above his Brethren Miniſters, by a Superiour Title, or any ſecular advantage, but by his divine endowments and ſeparate excellencies, his extraordinary wiſdom, zeal, and fidelity: he was the Soul of that Happy Society.

He continued among his beloved people, till the year 1660. then he came to *London*. A while after the King's Reſtoration, there were many Endeavours us'd in order to an Agreement between the Epiſcopal and Presbyterian Miniſters. For this end ſeveral of the Biſhops elect, and of the Miniſters, were call'd to attend the King at *Worceſter*-Houſe: there was read to them a Declaration, drawn up with great wiſdom and moderation, by the Lord Chancellor the Earl of *Clarendon*. I ſhall onely obſerve that in reading the ſeveral parts of the Declaration, Dr. *Morley*

ley was the principal manager of the Conference among the Biſhops, and Mr. *Baxter* among the Miniſters: and one particular I cannot forget; it was deſir'd by the Miniſters, that the Biſhops ſhould exerciſe their Church Power with the counſel and conſent of Preſbyters. This limiting of their Authority was ſo diſpleaſing, that Dr. *Coſins*, then elect of *Durham*, ſaid, If your Majeſty grants this you will Unbiſhop your Biſhops. Dr. *Reynolds* upon this produced the Book, entituled, *The Portraicture of his Sacred Majeſty in his Solitude and Sufferings*, and read the following Paſſage: *Not that I am againſt the managing of this Preſidency and Authority in One Man by the joint Counſel and Conſent of many Presbyters: I have offer'd to reſtore that, as a fit means to avoid thoſe Errors, Corruptions and Partialities, which are incident*

to

to any One Man: alſo to avoid Tyranny, which becomes no Chriſtians, leaſt of all Church-men. Beſides, it will be a means to take away that burthen and odium of affairs, which may lie too heavy on one Man's ſhoulders, as indeed I think it did formerly on the Biſhops here. The good Doctor thought, that the Judgment of the King's afflicted and inquiring Father would have been of great moment to incline him to that temperament: but the King preſently replied, *All that is in that Book is not Goſpel.* My Lord Chancellor prudently moderated in that matter, that the Biſhops, in weighty Cauſes, ſhould have the aſſiſtance of the Presbyters.

Mr. *Baxter* conſidering the ſtate of our affairs in that time, was well pleaſed with that Declaration: He was of *Calvin*'s mind, who judiciouſly obſerves, upon

our Saviour's words, That *the Son of Man ſhall ſend forth his Angels, and they ſhall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend: Qui ad extirpandum quicquid diſplicet præpoſtere feſtinant, antevertant Chriſti judicium, & ereptum Angelis officium ſibi temere uſurpant. They that make too much haſte to redreſs at once all things that are amiſs, anticipate the Judgment of Chriſt, and raſhly uſurp the Office of the Angels.* Beſides, that Declaration granted ſuch a freedom to Conſcientious Miniſters, that were unſatisfied as to the Old Conformity, that if it had been obſerved, it had prevented the dolefull Diviſion ſucceeded afterward. But when there was a motion made in the Houſe of Commons, that the Declaration might paſs into an Act, it was oppos'd by one of the Secretarys of State, which was

was a ſufficient Indication of the King's averſeneſs to it.

After the Declaration there were many Conferences at the *Savoy* between the Biſhops and ſome Doctors of their Party, with Mr. *Baxter* and ſome other Miniſters, for an Agreement, wherein his Zeal for Peace was moſt conſpicuous: but all was in vain. Of the Particulars that were debated, he has given an account in Print.

Mr. *Baxter*, after his coming to *London*, during the time of Liberty, did not neglect that which was the principal Exerciſe of his Life, the preaching the Goſpel, being always ſenſible of his duty of ſaving Souls. He Preacht at St. *Dunſtans* on the Lord's-days in the Afternoon. I remember one inſtance of his firm Faith in the Divine Providence, and his Fortitude when he was engaged in

his Miniſtry there. The Church was Old, and the People were apprehenſive of ſome danger in meeting in it: and while Mr. *Baxter* was Preaching, ſomething in the Steeple fell down, and the noiſe ſtruck ſuch a terror into the People, they preſently, in a wild diſorder, run out of the Church: their eagerneſs to haſte away, put all into a tumult: Mr. *Baxter*, without viſible diſturbance, ſat down in the Pulpit: after the hurry was over, he reſum'd his Diſcourſe, and ſaid, to compoſe their Minds; *We are in the Service of God to prepare our ſelves, that we may be fearleſs at the great noiſe of the diſſolving World, when the Heavens ſhall paſs away, and the Elements melt in fervent heat; the Earth alſo, and the Works therein ſhall be burnt up.*

After

After the Church of St. *Dunſtans* was pull'd down in order to its re-building, he removed to *Black-Fryars*, and continued his preaching there to a vaſt Concourſe of Hearers, till the fatal *Bartholomew.*

In the Year 1661, a Parliament was call'd, wherein was paſt the Act of Uniformity, that expell'd from their publick Places about two thouſand Miniſters. I will onely take notice concerning the Cauſes of that Proceeding, that the Old Clergy from Wrath and Revenge, and the young Gentry from their ſervile Compliance with the Court, and their Diſtaſte of ſerious Religion, were very active to carry on and compleat that Act. That this is no raſh Imputation upon the ruling Clergy then is evident, not onely from their Con-

currence in passing that Law, for Actions have a Language as convincing as that of Words, but from Dr. *Sheldon* then Bishop of *London* their great Leader; who when the Lord Chamberlain *Manchester*, told the King, while the Act of Uniformity was under debate, *that he was afraid the Terms of it were so rigid, that many of the Ministers would not comply with it*; he replyed, *I am afraid they will.* This Act was past after the King had engaged his Faith and Honour in his Declaration from *Breda, to preserve the Liberty of Conscience inviolate*, which promise open'd the way for his Restoration; and after the Royalists here, had given publick Assurance, that all former Animosities should be buried, *as Rubbish under the Foundation of a Universal Concord.* Mr. *Baxter* was involv'd with so many Ministers in this

this Calamity, who was their brighteſt Ornament, and the beſt Defence of their righteous, though oppreſſed Cauſe: Two Obſervations he made upon that Act and our Ejection.

The one was, that the Miniſters were turned and kept out from the publick Exerciſe of their Office, in that time of their Lives, that was moſt fit to be dedicated end employed for the Service and Glory of God, that is between thirty and ſixty Years, when their intellectual and inſtrumental Faculties were in their Vigour. The other was in a Letter to me after the Death of ſeveral Biſhops who were concurrent in paſſing that Act, and expreſt no Sorrow for it: his words were, *for ought I ſee, the Biſhops will own the turning of us out, at the Tribunal of Chriſt, and thither we appeal.*

After the Act of Uniformity had taken its effect, in the Ejection of ſo many Miniſters, there was ſometimes a Connivance at the private Exerciſe of their Miniſtry, ſometime publick Indulgence granted, and often a ſevere Proſecution of them, as the Popiſh and Politick Intereſt of the Court varied. When there was Liberty, Mr. *Baxter* applyed himſelf to his delightful Work, to the great Advantage of thoſe who enjoyed his Miniſtry. But the Church-Party oppos'd vehemently the Liberty that was granted. Indeed ſuch was their Fierceneſs, that if the Diſſenting Miniſters *had been as wiſe as Serpents, and as innocent as Doves*, they could not eſcape their deep Cenſures. The Pulpit repreſented them as ſeditiouſly diſaffected to the State, as obſtinate Schiſmaticks, and often the *Name of God was not onely taken*

in

in vain, but in violence, to authoriſe their hard Speeches, and harder Actions againſt them. Some drops of that Storm fell upon Mr. *Baxter*, who calmly ſubmitted to their injurious dealings. I ſhall ſpeak of that afterward.

In the Interval, between his Deprivation and his Death, he wrote and publiſht the moſt of his Books, of which I ſhall give ſome account.

His Books, for their number and variety of Matter in them, make a Library. They contain a Treaſure of Controverſial, Caſuiſtical, Poſitive and Practical Divinity. Of them I ſhall relate the Words of one, whoſe exact Judgment, joyn'd with his Moderation, will give a great value to his Teſtimony; they are of the very Reverend Dr. *Wilkins*, afterwards Biſhop of *Cheſter*: he ſaid that Mr. *Baxter* had *cultivated every Subject he handled*; and *if he had*

had lived in the Primitive Times, he had been one of the Fathers of the Church. I ſhall add what he ſaid with admiration of him another time, *That it was enough for one Age to produce ſuch a Perſon as Mr.* Baxter. Indeed, he had ſuch an amplitude in his Thoughts, ſuch vivacity of Imagination, and ſuch ſolidity and depth of Judgment, as rarely meet together. His inquiring Mind was freed from the ſervile dejection and bondage of an implicit Faith. He adher'd to the Scriptures as the perfect Rule of Faith, and ſearcht whether the Doctrines received and taught were Conſonant to it. This is the duty of every Chriſtian according to his capacity, eſpecially of Miniſters, and the neceſſary means to open the Mind for Divine Knowledge, and for the advancement of the Truth. He publiſht ſeveral Books againſt the Papiſts

Papiſts with that clearneſs and ſtrength, as will Confound, if not Convince them. He ſaid, *he onely deſir'd Armies and Antiquity againſt the Papiſts: Armies*, he cauſe of their bloody Religion ſo often exemplified in *England*, *Ireland*, *France* and other Countries. However they may appear on the Stage, they are always the ſame perſons in the Tyring-room: their Religion binds them to extirpate Hereticks, and often over-rules the milder inclinations of their nature: *Antiquity*, becauſe they are inveigled with a fond pretence to it, as if it were favourable to their Cauſe: but it has been demonſtrated by many learned Proteſtants, that the Argument of Antiquity is directly againſt the principal Doctrines of Popery, as that of the Supremacy, of Tranſubſtantiation, of Image-worſhip, and others.

He

His Books of the Reasonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion.

He has wrote ſeveral excellent Books againſt the impudent Atheiſm of this looſe Age. In them he eſtabliſhes the fundamental Principle, upon which the whole Fabrick of Chriſtianity is built; that after this ſhort uncertain life, there is a future ſtate of happineſs or miſery equally Eternal, and that Death is the laſt irrevocable ſtep into that unchangeable ſtate. From hence it follows by infallible Conſequence, that the reaſonable Creature ſhould prefer the intereſt of the Soul before that of the Body, and ſecure Eternal life. This being laid, he proves the Chriſtian Religion to be the onely way of fallen Man's being reſtor'd to the favour of God, and obtaining a bleſſed Immortality. This great Argument he manages with that clearneſs and ſtrength, that none can refuſe aſſent unto it, without denying the infallible Princi-

Principles of Faith, and the evident Principles of Nature.

He alſo publiſht ſome warm Diſcourſes, to Apologize for the Preaching of Diſſenting Miniſters, and to excite them to do their Duty. He did not think that Act of Uniformity could diſoblige them from the Exerciſe of their Office. 'Tis true, Magiſtrates are Titular-Gods by their Deputation and Vicegerency, but ſubordinate and accountable to God above. Their Laws have no binding force upon the Conſcience, but from his Command; and if contrary to his Law, are to be diſobeyed. The Miniſters Conſecrated to the Service of God are under a moral perpetual Obligation of Preaching the ſaving Truths of the Goſpel, as they have opportunity. There needs no miraculous Teſtimony of their Commiſſion from Heaven, to authorize the doing their ordinary Duty. In

In ſome points of modern Controverſie he judiciouſly choſe the middle way, and adviſed young Divines to follow it. His reverence of the Divine Purity, made him very ſhy and jealous of any Doctrine that ſeem'd to reflect a blemiſh and ſtain upon it. He was a clear aſſerter of the ſoveraign Freeneſs, and infallible Efficacy of Divine Grace in the Converſion of Souls. In a Sermon reciting the Words of the Covenant of Grace, *I will put my fear into their hearts, and they ſhall not depart from me*; he obſerved the Tenor of it was, *I will, and you ſhall.* Divine Grace makes the rebellious Will obedient, but does not make the Will to be no Will. By the Illumination of the Mind, the Will is inclin'd to Obedience, according to the Words of our Saviour, *All that have heard and learn'd of the Father come to me.* He preach'd that the Death

Death of Christ was certainly effectual for all the Elect to make them partakers of Grace and Glory, and that it was so far beneficial to all Men, that they are not left in the same desperate State with the fallen Angels, but are made capable of Salvation by the Grace of the Gospel: not capable of Efficience to convert themselves, but as Subjects to receive saving Grace. He did so honour the sincerity of God, as entirely to believe his Will declared in his Word: he would not interpret the Promises of the Gospel in a less gracious sense than God intended them: Therefore if Men finally perish, 'tis not for want of Mercy in God, nor Merits in Christ, but for their wilfull refusing Salvation.

His Books of Practical Divinity have been effectual for more numerous Conversions of Sinners to God,

God, than any printed in our time: and while the Church remains on Earth, will be of continual Efficacy to recover loſt Souls. There is a vigorous Pulſe in them that keeps the Reader awake and attentive. His Book of the *Saints Everlaſting Reſt*, was written by him when languiſhing in the ſuſpence of Life and Death, but has the Signatures of his holy and vigorous Mind. To allure our Deſires, he unvails the Sanctuary above, and diſcovers the Glory and Joys of the Bleſſed in the Divine Preſence, by a Light ſo ſtrong and lively, that all the glittering Vanities of this World vaniſh in that Compariſon, and a ſincere Believer will deſpiſe them, as one of mature Age does the Toys and Baubles of Children. To excite our fear he removes the Skreen, and makes the Everlaſting Fire of Hell ſo viſible, and repreſents the tormenting

menting Passions of the Damned in those dreadfull Colours, that if duly considered, would check and controul the unbridled licentious Appetites of the most sensual Wretches.

His *Call to the Unconverted*; how small in bulk, but how powerfull in vertue? Truth speaks in it with that authority and efficacy, that it makes the Reader to lay his hand upon his heart, and find he has a Soul and a Conscience, though he lived before as if he had none. He told some friends, that six Brothers were Converted by reading that Call; and that every Week he received Letters of some Converted by his Books. This he spake with most humble thankfulness, that God was pleased to use him as an instrument for the Salvation of Souls.

He that was so solicitous for the Salvation of others, was not neg-

ligent of his own; but as regular Love requires, his first Care was to prepare himself for Heaven. In him the Vertues of the Contemplative and Active Life were eminently united. His time was spent in Communion with God, and in Charity to Men. He lived above the sensible World, and in solitude and silence convers'd with God. The frequent and serious Meditation of Eternal things was the powerfull means to make his Heart holy and heavenly, and from thence his Conversation. His Life was a practical Sermon, a drawing Example. There was an Air of Humility and Sanctity in his mortified Countenance; and his Deportment was becoming a Stranger upon Earth, and a Citizen of Heaven.

Though all Divine Graces, the *fruit of the Spirit*, were visible in his Conversation, yet some were more eminent. Hu-

Humility is to other Graces, as the Morning-Star is to the Sun, that goes before it, and follows it in the Evening: Humility prepares us for the receiving of Grace, *God gives Grace to the humble:* and it follows the Exercise of Grace; *Not I*, says the Apostle, *but the Grace of God in me.* In Mr. *Baxter* there was a rare Union of sublime Knowledge, and other spiritual Excellencies, with the lowest opinion of himself. He wrote to one that sent a Letter to him full of Expressions of Honour and Esteem, *You do admire one you do not know; Knowledge will cure your Error. The more we know God, the more reason we see to admire him;* but our knowledge of the Creature discovers its imperfections, and lessens our esteem. To the same person expressing his Veneration of him for his excellent Gifts and Graces, he replied with

heat, *I have the remainders of pride in me, how dare you blow up the ſparks of it?* He deſir'd ſome Miniſters, his choſen friends, to meet at his Houſe, and ſpend a day in Prayer for his direction in a matter of moment: before the Duty was begun, he ſaid, *I have deſir'd your aſſiſtance at this time, becauſe I believe God will ſooner hear your Prayers than mine.* He imitated St. *Auſtin* both in his Penitential Confeſſions, and Retractations. In conjunction with Humility, he had great Candor for others. He could willingly bear with perſons of differing Sentiments: *he would not proſtitute his own judgment, nor raviſh anothers.* He did not over-eſteem himſelf, nor under-value others. He would give liberal Encomiums of many Conforming Divines. He was ſevere to himſelf, but candid in excuſing the faults of others. Where-

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as, the buſie Inquirer and Cenſurer of the faults of others, is uſually the eaſie Neglecter of his own.

Self-denial and Contempt of the World were ſhining Graces in him. I never knew any perſon leſs indulgent to himſelf, and more indifferent to his Temporal intereſt. The offer of a Biſhoprick was no temptation to him: for his exalted Soul deſpiſed the Pleaſures and Profits which others ſo earneſtly deſire; he valued not an empty Title upon his Tomb.

His Patience was truly Chriſtian. God does often try his Children by Afflictions, to exerciſe their Graces, to occaſion their Victory, and to entitle them to a triumphant Felicity.

This Saint was tried by many Afflictions. We are very tender of our Reputation: his Name was obſcur'd under a Cloud of detraction. Many ſlanderous Darts were

thrown at him. He was charg'd with Schism and Sedition. He was accus'd for his Paraphrase upon the New Testament, as guilty of disloyal Aspersions upon the Government, and Condemn'd, unheard, to a Prison, where he remain'd for some years. But he was so far from being moved at the unrighteous prosecution, that he joyfully said to a constant friend, *What could I desire more of God, than after having serv'd him to my power, I should now be called to suffer for him.* One who had been a fierce Dissenter, was afterward rankled with an opposite heat, and very contumeliously in his Writings reflected upon Mr. *Baxter*, who calmly endur'd his Contempt: and when the same person publisht a learned Discourse in Defence of Christianity, Mr. *Baxter* said, *I forgive him all for his Writing that Book.* Indeed he was so much the more

more truly honourable, as he was thought worthy of the hatred of those persons.

'Tis true, the Censures and Reproaches of others whom he esteemed and loved, toucht him in the tender part. But he, with the great Apostle, *counted it a small thing to be judg'd by Mens day.* He was entire to his Conscience, and independent upon the opinion of others. But his Patience was more eminently tried by his continual pains and languishing. Martyrdom is a more easie way of dying, when the Combat and the Victory are finisht at once, than to dye by degrees every day. His Complaints were frequent, but who ever heard an unsubmissive word drop from his lips? He was not put out of his Patience, nor out of the possession of himself. In his sharp Pains, he said, *I have a rational Patience, and a believing Patience*, though sense would recoil. His

His pacifick Spirit was a clear Character of his being a Child of God. How ardently he endeavour'd to cement the breaches among us, which others widen and keep open, is publickly known. He said to a friend, *I can as willingly be a Martyr for Love, as for any Article of the Creed.* 'Tis strange to astonishment, that those who agree in the substantial and great Points of the Reformed Religion, and are of differing Sentiments onely in things not so clear, nor of that moment as those wherein they consent, should still be opposite Parties. Methinks the remembrance how our Divisions lately expos'd us to our watchfull Adversary, and were almost fatal to the interest of Religion, should conciliate our Affections. Our common danger and common deliverance, should prepare our Spirits for a sincere and firm Union. When our Sky was so

so dark without a glimmering Horizon, then by a new dawning of God's wonderful Providence, a Deliverer appear'd, our gracious Soveraign, who has the Honour of establishing our Religion at home, and gives us hopes of restoring it abroad, in places from whence it has been so unrighteously and cruelly expell'd. May the Union of his Protestant Subjects in religious things so desir'd by wise and good Men, be accomplisht by his princely Counsel and Authority. Integrity with Charity would remove those things that have so long disunited us. I return from this Digression.

Love to the Souls of Men was the peculiar Character of Mr. *Baxter's* Spirit. In this he imitated and honoured our Saviour, who prayed, dyed, and lives for the Salvation of Souls. All his natural and supernatural Endowments

ments were ſubſervient to this bleſſed End. It was *his Meat and Drink*, the Life and Joy of his Life to doe good to Souls. His Induſtry was almoſt incredible in his Studies: he had a ſenſitive nature deſirous of eaſe as others have, and faint Faculties, yet ſuch was the continual Application of himſelf to his great Work, as if the Labour of one Day had ſupplyed ſtrength for another, *and the willingneſs of the Spirit had ſupported the Weakneſs of the Fleſh.* In his uſual Converſation, his ſerious, frequent and delightfull Diſcourſe was of Divine things, to inflame his Friends with the Love of Heaven. He received with tender Compaſſion and condeſcending Kindneſs, the meaneſt that came to him for Councel and Conſolation. He gave in one year a hundred Pounds to buy Bibles for the poor. He has in his Will diſpos'd of

of all that remains of his Eſtate after the Legacies to his Kindred, for the benefit of the Souls and Bodies of the Poor. He continued to preach ſo long notwithſtanding his waſted languiſhing Body, that the laſt time, he almoſt died in the Pulpit. It would have been his joy to have been *transfigured in the Mount.*

Not long after his laſt Sermon, he felt the Approaches of Death, and was confin'd to his ſick Bed. Death reveals the Secrets of the Heart, then words are ſpoken with moſt feeling and leaſt Affectation. This excellent Saint was the ſame in his Life and Death: his laſt Hours were ſpent in preparing others and himſelf to appear before God. He ſaid to his Friends that viſited him, *You come hither to learn to dye, I am not the onely Perſon that muſt go this way, I can aſſure you, that your whole Life be*

it never so long is little enough to prepare for Death. Have a care of this vain deceitful World, and the Lusts of the Flesh: be sure you choose God for your portion, Heaven for your home, God's Glory for your end, His word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet with Comfort.

Never was a Sinner more humble and debasing himself, never was a sincere Believer more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest Dunghil-worm ('twas his usual Expression) that ever went to Heaven. He admir'd the Divine Condescension to us, often saying, *Lord what is Man, what am I vile Worm to the great God?* Many times he prayed, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, and blessed God, that that was left upon record in the Gospel as an effectual Prayer. He said, *God may*

may juſtly condemn me for the beſt Duty I ever did: and all my hopes are from the free Mercy of God in Chriſt, which he often prayed for.

After a ſlumber he wak'd and ſaid, *I ſhall reſt from my Labour:* a Miniſter then preſent ſaid, *And your Works follow you:* to whom he replyed, *No Works, I will leave out Works, if God will grant me the other.* When a Friend was comforting him with the remembrance of the good many had received by his preaching and Writings, he ſaid, *I was but a Pen in God's hand, and what praiſe is due to a Pen.*

His reſign'd Submiſſion to the Will of God in his ſharp Sickneſs, was eminent. When extremity of pain conſtrain'd him earneſtly to pray to God for his releaſe by Death, he would check himſelf; *It is not fit for me to preſcribe, and ſaid, when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt.*

Be-

Being in great Anguish, he said, *O how unsearchable are his ways and his paths past finding out! the reaches of his Providence we cannot fathom:* and to his Friends, *Do not think the worse of Religion for what you see me suffer.*

Being often ask'd by his Friends, how it was with his inward Man, he replied, *I bless God I have a well-grounded Assurance of my Eternal Happiness, and great Peace and Comfort within; but it was his trouble he could not triumphantly express it, by reason of his extreme pains.* He said, *Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing of it: and that though his Judgment submitted, yet sense would still make him groan.*

Being asked by a Person of Quality, whether he had not great Joy from his believing Apprehensions of the invisible State, he replied: *What else think you Christianity*

ſtianity ſerves for? He ſaid, *The Conſideration of the Deity in his Glory and Greatneſs was too high for our Thoughts; but the Conſideration of the Son of God in our Nature, and of the Saints in Heaven, whom he knew and loved, did much ſweeten and familiarize Heaven to him.* The deſcription of Heaven in the 12. to the *Heb.* and the 22. was moſt comfortable to him: *That he was going to the innumerable company of Angels, and to the general Aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, whoſe Names are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; And to Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of ſprinkling that ſpeaks better things than the blood of Abel.* That Scripture, he ſaid, *deſerved a thouſand thouſand thoughts:* He ſaid, *O how comfortable is that promiſe, Eye has not ſeen,*

ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of Man to conceive the things God hath laid up for thoſe who love him.

At another time he ſaid, *That he found great comfort and ſweetneſs in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was ſorry that ſome good people were prejudiced againſt the uſe of it; for there were all neceſſary Petitions for Soul and Body contain'd in it.*

At other times he gave excellent Counſel to young Miniſters that viſited him, *and earneſtly prayed to God to bleſs their labours, and make them very ſucceſsfull in Converting many Souls to Chriſt:* And expreſs'd great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them; and that they were of moderate peaceſull Spirits.

He

He did often pray that God *would be mercifull to this miſerable diſtracted World: and that he would preſerve his Church and Intereſt in it.*

He advis'd his Friends to *beware of ſelf-conceitedneſs, as a Sin that was likely to ruine this Nation:* and ſaid, *I have written a Book againſt it, which I am afraid has done little good.*

Being ask'd whether he had alter'd his mind in Controverſial Points, he ſaid, *Thoſe that pleaſe may know my mind in my Writings: and what he had done was not for his own Reputation, but the Glory of God.*

I went to him with a very worthy Friend, Mr. *Mather* of *New-England*, the day before he died, and ſpeaking ſome comforting Words to him, he replyed, *I have pain, there is no arguing againſt ſenſe, but I have peace, I have peace.*

I told him you are now approaching to your long-desir'd home, he answer'd, *I believe, I believe.* He said to Mr. *Mather, I bless God that you have accomplisht your business, the Lord prolong your Life.*

He expresst a great willingness to dye, and during his Sickness, when the Question was ask'd, how he did, his reply was, *almost well.* His joy was most remarkable, when in his own apprehensions Death was neerest: and his Spiritual Joy at length was consummate in Eternal Joy.

Thus lived and dyed that blessed Saint. I have without any artificial Fiction of words, given a sincere short Account of him. All our Tears are below the just grief for such an unvaluable Loss. It is the Comfort of his Friends, that he enjoys a blessed Reward in Heaven, and has left a precious Remembrance on the Earth.

Now

Now bleſſed be the gracious God, that he was pleaſed to prolong the Life of his Servant, ſo uſeful and beneficial to the World to a full Age; that he has brought him ſlowly and ſafely to Heaven. I ſhall conclude this Account with my own deliberate Wiſh: May I live the ſhort remainder of my Life, as entirely to the Glory of God, as he lived; and when I ſhall come to the Period of my Life, may I dye in the ſame bleſſed Peace wherein he died; may I be with him in the Kingdom of Light and Love for ever.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Shall annex two Paſſages declaratory, the one of his Humility, the other of his Excellent Abilities. He had ſuch an Abhorrence of himſelf for his Sins, that he ſaid to a Miniſter, *I can more eaſily believe, that God*

God will forgive me, than I can forgive my self. The other was, being in the Pulpit to preach, he found that he had forgot to put his Notes into his Bible: he pray'd to God for his Assistance, and took the first Text that occurr'd to his View in opening the Bible: and preach'd an Excellent Sermon for the Matter and Order of it upon the Priesthood of Christ. After he was come down, he enquir'd of a Minister present, whether he had not tir'd him, who replyed, *No*; but with several others declar'd they were exceedingly satisfied with his Discourse: he said, *It was necessary to have a Body of Divinity in ones Head.*

FINIS.

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